GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
RURAL DEVELOPMENT
LOK SABHA

STARRED QUESTION NO:681
ANSWERED ON:14.05.2002
POVERTY ALLEVIATION IN RURAL AREAS
PRABHUNATH SINGH;RAGHUNATH JHA

Will the Minister of RURAL DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government have not been able to improve the quality of life of the rural population, especially those below the poverty line despite spending hundreds of crores of rupees;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether there have been unspent amounts of crores of rupees during 1994-95 to 1998-99; and

(d) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor?

Answer

MINISTER OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT (SHRI M. VENKAIAH NAIDU)

(a) to (d): A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement referred in Reply to Lok Sabha Starred Question No. 681 due for Answer on 14th May, 2002.

Studies undertaken to assess the impact of Rural Development Programmes, inrecent years, reflect improvement in the living conditions in the rural areas, including in regard to families Below the Poverty Line. As per the latest estimate on poverty ratios provided by the Planning Commission, the percentage of those living Below the Poverty Line in the rural areas has declined from 37.27% in 1993-94 to 27.09 % in 1999-2000 (based on 30 day recall period). The number of persons living Below the Poverty Line in rural areas has also declined from 24.40 crores in 1993-94 to 19.32 crores in 1999-2000, notwithstanding an estimated increase of about 5 crores in the rural population.

2. The unspent funds, as reported by the States and Union Territories, for the period 1994-95 to 1998-99, year-wise, in respect of the Programmes of the Ministry of Rural Development, are indicated below:

Year	Amount (Rs. crores)
1994-95	2385.10
1995-96	4378.16
1996-97	3632.10
1997-98	2372.47
1998-99	2380.51

3. States and Union Territories are allowed to carry forward the unspent balances upto certain specified limits and the excess amount(if any) is deducted from the releases during the succeeding year. The reasons for unspent balance have, inter alia, related to late submission of proposals by the State/UT authorities resulting in delayed release of funds and time over-runs in execution of works at the field level. It is noteworthy that during the year 2001-2002, the available funds were almost fully released to the States and Union Territories for various Rural Development Programmes.